

VZCZCXRO2307
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #0009 0071018
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 071018Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7540
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 000009

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S LAYLWARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: BANDA'S GOTTA GET A GRIP: FISSURES IN RULING
PARTY BUT STILL HOLDING TOGETHER

REF: A. 08 LUSAKA 875

[B](#). 09 LUSAKA 805

[C](#). 09 LUSAKA 911

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#). (C) Party-line fractures have begun to appear in the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democratic (MMD) Party's facade of unity since President Banda took office in November [2008](#). The ruling party's base remains fundamentally sound, and its internal conflicts should not undermine Zambia's stability. Much of the ruling party's internal tensions stem from friction between Banda and party leaders such as former vice president Enock Kavindele, former Defense Minister George Mpombo, and former Finance Minister Peter Magande, who (wrongly) assumed that Banda would keep his word and continue the policies of the late president Levy Mwanawasa and not seek re-election in 2011.

[2](#). (C) Banda was a consensus choice for president in 2008 who met party mavens' conditions as an older, not-so-ambitious candidate who should have been satisfied with serving out a partial term and making way for new leadership in 2011 (ref A). President Banda's efforts to pursue his own political agenda, including his re-election, has alienated some party leaders and prompted others, including MMD co-founder and former MP Syacheye Madyenkuku, former North Western Province MMD Chairman Bert Mushala, and former gender minister Patricia Mulasikwanda, to leave the party.

[3](#). (C) Banda has not yet consolidated control over the MMD, and his preference for command and control that harkens back to his United National Independence Party (UNIP) days when Zambia was a one-party state are making him more enemies within the party. Banda is an MMD newcomer who joined the party only in 2005, and therefore lacks an internal support base. Beyond his small circle of MMD confidantes, the president has few allies on whom he can rely to further his agenda. Some of his closest allies include Home Affairs Minister Lameck Mangani, Minister of Works and Supply Mike Mulongoti, Tourism Minister Catherine Namugala, newly appointed Agriculture Minister Peter Daka, Education Minister Dora Saliya, presidential advisor Ben Kapita, and Lusaka Province Minister Charles Shawa.

[4](#). (C) Banda's loose grip on the reigns of MMD power appears to have left him vulnerable to attacks by political rivals who are intent on replacing him as the party's 2011 presidential nominee. While Banda is interested in holding on to power and enriching his family (ref B), he indicated to Ambassador that he is sensitive to the criticism he has received as president and may forego re-election if he concludes that the costs (in terms of personal attacks) outweigh the benefits (ref C). He tried to pre-empt any open challenges by getting the MMD's National Executive Committee to indicate he would be the party candidate in 2011.

However, pressures from MMD rivals and the grass roots (provincial MMD structures) seem to have convinced Banda that he needs to allow an MMD convention to choose the party's candidate for 2011. His strategy now appears to be to try to time a convention to his benefit.

15. (C) Although the MMD has shown signs of fissures under Banda's stewardship, it has been resilient because it is the party with the deep pockets. That is why Banda's rivals will first try to supplant him as the MMD candidate rather than bolt to another political party or form their own party. Because of incumbency, the MMD has a tremendous financial resource advantage over all other parties and candidates.
BOOTH